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Celebrate the Sweet Taste of Spring This March

January and February in Wisconsin mean snow, wind chills and short days. The month of March brings us hope. Days grow longer, the sun's slant warms and melts, and the maple sap starts surging up in the trees. March is the time to tap the maple trees, watch the sap drip, and smile at the prospect of warm syrup on buttery pancakes. **YUM!**

Come join in this Wisconsin tradition at one of Wehr's Maple Sugar Programs.

NEW! **Maple Tapping Workshop**
Sunday, February 23, Noon- 2 pm [See page 9 for details](#)

Maple Sugar Days for Scouts
Saturday & Sunday, March 29 & 30, Noon- 1 pm
 Pre-registration Required [See page 8 for details](#)

Maple Sugar Days for Families
Saturday & Sunday, March 29 & 30, 1-4 pm [See page 10 for details](#)



CALLING ALL CHILI LOVERS!

Saturday, February 1
6 - 8:30 pm

Don't hibernate this winter! Join other chili enthusiasts for the Friends of Wehr Second Annual Groundhog Day Chili Cook-off. Be a chili contestant or simply come enjoy a variety of chili and then vote for your favorite. The top-rated chili cook will take home the coveted, traveling Groundhog Trophy!
 See page 3 for more details and how to enter!

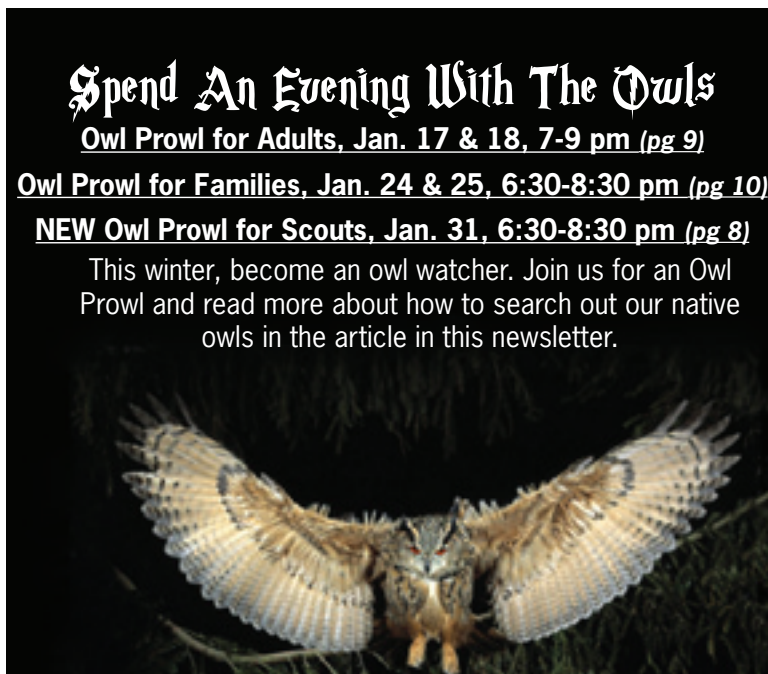
Spend An Evening With The Owls

Owl Prowl for Adults, Jan. 17 & 18, 7-9 pm (pg 9)

Owl Prowl for Families, Jan. 24 & 25, 6:30-8:30 pm (pg 10)

NEW Owl Prowl for Scouts, Jan. 31, 6:30-8:30 pm (pg 8)

This winter, become an owl watcher. Join us for an Owl Prowl and read more about how to search out our native owls in the article in this newsletter.





Center News

Building Repair Update

As all homeowners know, whenever you start a project it is never as simple as it should be. Replacing Wehr's windows have turned out to be the easy part of our repairs. We have many of the Fireplace Room windows already installed complete with plaques. Additional windows have been ordered and the sponsored windows in the Gardner Room will be installed when the new siding goes up. There are still more windows to fund so please consider making a donation. Funds raised by the Friends of Wehr for the windows will allow our allocated Milwaukee County funds to go further towards repairing the siding.

Once we started planning the siding project many other problems came to light. The most difficult of all is the wonderful wildlife living in the Gardner Room ceiling.... we are a nature center after all. It is going to be a major project to evict and clean-up after the poor housekeeping of the many families of squirrels and mice that reside there. Because it involves the ceiling there are hazardous materials concerns that must be addressed first. Once that is taken care of, work will begin to repair all the animal damage. Currently all ceiling work is planned for February 2014. Then work can begin on the soffit and siding replacement. Installation of Gardner Room windows will happen along with the siding replacement.



Please bear with us through the spring as our building is being repaired. All involved hope that everything will be completed by June, 2014. If you have any questions or want to donate toward a window please call Deb McRae at 414-425-8550.

Wehr Celebrates 40 Years



Wehr Nature Center is celebrating its 40th year this summer. Forty years of excited squeals, wondrous discoveries and peaceful contemplations by the children and adults who have wandered our trails and taken part in our programs. Over forty years of work by volunteers and staff to protect nature and share its wonders with the citizens of Milwaukee County. Memories have been made here for generations and during this 40th Anniversary year we would love to have you share your favorite Wehr moments with us.

Share in the Celebration

Hold the Date - Wehr's 40th Anniversary Open House, Sunday June 22, 1-4 pm

View the Memory Wall, take a walk along the timeline trail, make a commemorative plaster track, go on a guided history hike, listen to stories from Wehr's past and help us create a vision for the future.

We Want Your Snapshots Help us tell the story of Wehr by sharing your favorite snapshot from the past. Send in your photo with details about its location, approximate date and, if included, names of people pictured. Photos can be mailed or dropped off. Submissions are due by **May 1st** and will be returned if you include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

What Does Wehr Mean To You? What one image best represents what Wehr means to you? Submit your image as an 8x10 photo by **May 1**, with your name and contact information written on the back. We will choose representative photos for the 40th Anniversary display that will be up from June to August, 2014.

MEET THE NEW "FACE OF WEHR" PARK WORKER BREEANN BEHRENDT

If you're a regular visitor to Wehr Nature Center, you have no doubt noticed a new and smiling face greeting you at the front desk. Breeann started in her part time position at WNC in April, 2013, working Saturdays and Mondays. A lifelong resident of Franklin, she is a graduate of Whitnall High School and also attended UW Green Bay. Breeann likes hanging out with friends, reading, and going to concerts and

Brewers games. Breeann is an excellent addition as receptionist for Wehr's visitors and Nature Store customers. She is also a quick study in deciphering all the challenges at the hub of the busy nature center. Visitors, volunteers, and the rest of the staff appreciate her friendly smile and helpful attitude. Welcome to the group, Breeann.





Friends Of Wehr

Calling all Chili Lovers!

Saturday, February 1, 6-8:30 pm

Don't hibernate this winter! Join other chili enthusiasts for the Friends of Wehr Second Annual Groundhog Day Chili Cook-off. Be a chili contestant or simply come taste and enjoy a variety of chili and vote for your favorite. The top-rated chili cook will take home the coveted, traveling Groundhog Trophy!

The meal includes assorted side dishes, breads, corn muffins, chili condiments and delectable desserts. Bring your wallet and bid at the Silent Auction. All funds raised by this event will support Wehr's Accessibility Renovations.

Fee: \$17 per person

\$5 upgrade gets you a beer or wine token

Reservations guarantee a seat. Walk-ins are welcome as space allows.

Chili Cooks Wanted

Call Wehr at (414) 425-8550 by **Friday January 24** to register as a chili cook. Bring six quarts of your recipe ready to serve to Wehr by 5:30 pm on February 1.

Chili Cooks get into the event for FREE!

Thank You!

Your contributions to the Friends of Wehr are appreciated and always used with careful consideration.

Donations

Howard Aprill
Anonymous
Gary Smieja
Sandy Lukaszewski Rose
Mary MacLaren
Ray Scolavino

Memorials/Donations

In Memory of Bob and Kitty Wall
Debra Theel
In Memory of Robert J. Wall, Jr.
Debra Theel
In Honor of Mary K and Bob Koeber
Linda Koeber
In Honor of Rich and Diane Sterle
Richard Sterle
In Memory of Peter Gilbertson
Gerald Gilbertson

In Memory of Thomas Charles Meier
Judene Schmidt
In Memory of Thomas C. Block
Carol Block
In Honor of Betty Gilbertson
Gerald Gilbertson

New Windows

Paul and Pat Brings
Mary Cywinski
Joicelyn and Jeff Schwager
Carol Nelson
Frank and Jean Kovac
Joanne and Ali Pfeffer
Mariette and Dave Nowak
Peter and Nancy Conigliaro
Larry Backus
David and Nancy Hager
James and Ann Barnes

Robert and Arlene Logan
Dennis and Suzanne Miller
Thomas and Kathleen Reeves
Betty Andrews Storey
Ralph and Judy Faja
Rockwell Automation
In Memory of Jennifer L. Rick-Opichka
Michael and Mary Rick

The Accessibility Capital Project

Jerome J and Dorothy H. Holz Family Foundation

In-Kind Donation

Wil-Kil Pest Control
Kristin Maegli
Karen Kerans
Bower's Produce

Target-Franklin

Halloween Haunts Sponsors

Kohl's
Wisconsin Metro
Audubon Society
Anonymous Donor

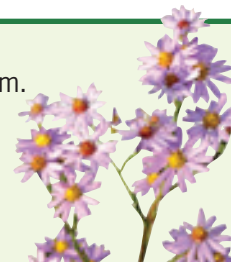
Thank you to Jackie Crivello's Wild Birds Unlimited for their continuing support in keeping our feeders full and our birds happy. Please support their business located at 4454 S. 108th Street in Greenfield.



Wild Birds Unlimited

Native Plant Sale Pre-order Forms Available in March

The annual Mother's Day Native Plant Sale will be May 10 & 11 from 9 am to 3 pm. Pre-order forms will be available in early March. Pre-ordering helps but does not guarantee specific plants as some plants may not be available due to growing conditions. To get an order form, go to www.friendsofwehr.org/nature-center/spring-events/mothers-day-native-plant-sale/, or call Wehr at (414) 425-8550. Pre-orders are due by April 24th



WEHR WORDS - Editor: Bev Bryant
Contributors: Deb McRae, Mark Verhagen,
Pat Fojut, Karen Keransl, Emily Brown



Nature Volunteer News

Upcoming Opportunities for Current Volunteers

Dotty's Crafters: Wednesdays, January 8, February 5, March 5, 1-3pm

Maple Sugar Days: Saturday & Sunday, March 29 & 30; shifts between 11am and 5pm

Volunteer Training and Brunch: Sat., March 29: Training 9am; Potluck Brunch 10am

Volunteers helping with the Maple Sugar Days event are encouraged to attend the training and stay to share some of Wehr's homemade syrup at the potluck brunch.

Teaching Naturalist Trainings:

Winter Puppet Show: Possum's Adventures: Tuesday, January 21, 9am-Noon

Starlab Training: Wednesday, January 22, 9am-Noon

Maple Magic Training: Tuesday, February 18, 9am-Noon

Spring Program Training: Tuesday, March 25; Spring Puppet Show, Possum's Adventures: 9 am-Noon; Nature's Neighborhood: 1-4pm

Ongoing Opportunities

Phenology, Wheel n Chip, Critter Care, Teaching School Groups, Trail Patrol
To sign up to help call 414-425-8550.

New volunteers are always welcome! Contact Emily Brown today at emily.brown@ces.uwex.edu

uwex.edu and make an appointment.



Burn Training

Tuesday, March 4 1-4 pm

Wehr volunteers who intend to help with prescribed burns at the Nature Center are required to attend this classroom training session. An outdoor training session will be held on a future date to be announced. For further information call Mark at (414) 425-8550.

Thank You Volunteers

A big **THANK YOU** goes out to all of our hardworking Volunteers. The work of Wehr Nature Center would not be possible without the dedication and passion they share. Individuals contributed anywhere from 1 to 519 hours during the last volunteer year from September 1, 2012 – August 31, 2013. Their invaluable efforts supported our events and education programs, helped with office tasks and maintained our building and trails.

Wehr's Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner on November 1st was a success and a great way to honor our dedicated Volunteers. 75 people attended and enjoyed hearing new Parks Director, John Dargle, share his vision for the County Parks and Wehr Nature Center. Mr. Dargle's program fit beautifully with our theme: Metamorphosis. 2013 was certainly a year of transformation at Wehr and we thank our Volunteers for their patience through this time of change. Barbara Nickel (519 hours), Barb Nellen (456 hours) and Jim Rieck (408 hours) (not pictured) were the top 3 volunteers of 2012.

Volunteer Reminder: Please remember to fill out your hours forms located in your Volunteer folder. These numbers are tallied each September and help us to properly recognize Volunteers for all their service throughout the year.

Barb Nellan with Deb McRae

Barbara Nickel with Mr. Dargle



JANUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|---|-----------|--|--|
|  | | |  | | | |
| 5 NatureNauts 1-2 pm | 6 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am | 7 | 8 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm | 9 | 10 | 11 Camera Club 9-11 am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm |
| 12 | 13 Little Wonders Two Year-Olds 9:30-10:30 am Three Year-Olds 11 am-Noon | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17  Owl Prowl for Adults 7-9 pm | 18 Owl Prowl for Adults 7-9 pm |
| 19 | 20 | 21 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am-Noon | 22 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am- Noon | 23 | 24  Owl Prowl for Families 6:30-8:30 pm | 25 Owl Prowl for Families 6:30-8:30 pm |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31  Owl Prowl for Scouts 6:30-8:30 pm | |
| For more information call 414-425-8550 All programs & events subject to change. Parking fees may apply. | | | | | | |

FEBRUARY

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|--|--|-----------|-----------|--|
| | |  | | | | 1 GROUNDHOG DAY COOKOFF 6-8:30 pm  |
| 2 | 3 Little Wonders Two Year-Olds 9:30-10:30 am Three Year-Olds 11am-Noon | 4 | 5 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm | 6 | 7 | 8 Camera Club 9-11 am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm |
| 9 NatureNauts 1-2 pm | 10 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am | 11 Wehr Astronomical Society "What's New In Space?" 7 pm | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 Snow Stories and S'Mores 6:30-8:30 pm  |
| 16 | 17 | 18 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am-Noon | 19 Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society "Climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro" 7 pm | 20 | 21 | 22 Camera Club 9-11 am |
| 23 Maple Tapping Workshop Noon-2 pm  | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |

For more information call 414-425-8550
 All programs & events subject to change.
 Parking fees may apply.

MARCH

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|---|--|-----------|--|--|
| 1 Saturday 2 | 3 Little Wonders Two Year-Olds 9:30-10:30 am Three Year-Olds 11am-Noon Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm | 4 Prairie Burn Training for Volunteers 1-4pm | 5 Dotty's Crafters 1-3 pm | 6 | 7 | 8 Camera Club 9-11am Wild Ones 1:30-3:30 pm |
| 9 NatureNauts 1-2 pm | 10 NatureNauts 9:30-10:30 am Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm | 11 Wehr Astronomical Society "Help With Your Telescope" 7 pm | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm | 18 | 19 Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society "Kissed By A Giraffe" 7 pm | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 Wisconsin Master Naturalist 5:30-8:30 pm | 25 Teaching Naturalist Training 9 am-Noon 1-3 pm | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 Maple Sugar Days Volunteer Training 9 am Volunteer Brunch 10 am Maple Sugar Days for Scouts Noon- 1 pm Maple Sugar Days for Families 1-4 pm |
| 30 Maple Sugar Days for Scouts Noon-1 pm Maple Sugar Days for Families 1-4 pm | 31 | For more information call 414-425-8550 All programs & events subject to change. Parking fees may apply. | | |  |  |



Nature Discovery For Children

Little Wonders

A program for 2 and 3 year olds to share with their favorite adult

Times: **9:30-10:30 am for Two Year Olds** **11 am-Noon for Three Year Olds**

Swirling Snowflakes Monday, January 13

Bundle up your tots in their snowsuits and bring them over to Wehr's Winter Wonderland. We will read *Millions of Snowflakes* by Mary Siddals, make snow art, and eat a yummy snowflake snack.

Winter Sleepers Monday, February 3

Wear your pajamas and slippers to the Nature Center and discover what animals snooze away the winter. We will read *Bear Snores On* by Karma Wilson, eat a bedtime snack, and make ourselves some cozy dens to sleep in.

Spunky Skunks Monday, March 3

We will learn all about those smelly, striped critters of the night as we enjoy an hour of pretending to be skunks. We will read *The Bravest of the Brave* by Shutta Crum, make and wear our own skunk costume, and eat a snack fit for a skunk.

NatureNauts

A series of fun-filled programs for children 4-6 years old and their favorite adult.

1-2 pm for Sunday Classes **9:30-10:30 am for Monday Classes**

Snowflakes Sunday, January 5 or Monday, January 6

Discover how those fluffy, swirly snowflakes affect plants, animals, and people. We will explore Wehr's snowy winterscape as we make tracks, look for clues to winter animals, and make and take home a snowflake craft.

Little Stinkers Sunday, February 9 or Monday, February 10

Join us as we sing the "skunk song" and learn about the secret lives of these smelly neighbors. NatureNauts will make their own skunk craft and take a short walk in search of skunk clues.

Maple Magic Sunday, March 9 or Monday, March 10

Come learn about sap, sugar, and syrup from the Wisconsin State Tree- the Sugar Maple. Children will hear the story of *Maggie the Maple Tree* by Karen Kerans and visit the Sugarbush to meet Maggie and give her a hug. We'll enjoy a maple syrup treat after our walk.



Pre-registration is required for all children's programs **Deadline is the Wednesday before the program date**

Fees: \$10 per child \$7 for Milwaukee County Residents \$5 for members of Friends of Wehr

Nature Discovery for Youth Groups

Owl Prowl for Scouts Friday, January 31, 6:30-8:30 pm

Location: Ross Lodge in Whitnall Park

Scout and youth groups are invited to spend an evening with the owls. Children will learn about amazing owl adaptations and habits through fun activities and then head out into the woods to look and listen for owls.

Ages: Children in 2nd Grade and Older

Fees: \$10 per person \$7 for Milwaukee County Residents \$5 members of Friends of Wehr

One Adult Required for Every 5 Children Registration Required by Wednesday January 29

Maple Sugar Pays for Scouts Saturday & Sunday, March 29 and 30

Reserved Hike Times Start At From Noon, 12:20, 12:40 pm

Youth and scout groups are invited to join in the Wisconsin spring tradition of Maple Sugarin'. This 2 hour program includes a guided walk through the Sugarbush, tree drilling practice, a visit to an old fashioned sugarin' camp, activities that teach about the Native American origins of maple syrup, and a taste of real maple syrup on a pancake. **Groups must preregister to reserve a hike start time (Noon, 12:20, 12:40 pm).** Refreshments including popcorn and maple sugar cotton candy will be available for purchase.

Registration Begins Monday, January 13 Fee: \$5.00 per person

Optional Maple Sugar fun patches can be pre-ordered at time of reservation for \$2 a patch





Nature Discovery for Adults

Spend An Evening With The Owls

Owl Prowl for Adults, January 17 & 18, 7-9 pm

Join a naturalist for an evening out with the owls. An interactive program will highlight the habits and adaptations of our nocturnal neighbors. Then we will walk the woodlands of Wehr listening and looking for Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls.

*Fee: \$10 per person, \$7 per person
Milwaukee Co. Resident,
\$5 for Friends of Wehr members*



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Maple Tapping Workshop

Sunday, February 23, 12:30-2 pm

Join an expert maple syrup maker and learn how to turn your backyard maple tree into liquid gold! The workshop will cover how to identify a suitable tree, the tools and tricks of drilling and tapping, how to safely store and boil-down sap, and the process of "finishing off" and storing syrup. The workshop fee includes a set of tapping supplies (spile, bag & holder).

*FEE: \$25 per person; \$20 for Friend of Wehr Members
Pre-registration required by Wednesday, February 19*



Wisconsin Master Naturalist Training Series

Mondays, March 3, 10, 17, 24, April 7, 14, 28, May 5, 12 5:30-8:30 pm

Required Fieldtrips: Saturdays, May 3 and May 10

This statewide program is designed to provide a broad introduction to the natural history of Wisconsin and to train volunteers in Citizen Science skills. Topics will include Ecology, Plant Communities, Landscapes, Water, Aquatic Plants

& Animals, Interpretation and Human Influences. The course will include classroom instruction, activities, two off-site field trip sessions and a capstone project to practice skills and highlight ecosystem concepts. Participants earn Master Naturalist certification upon completion of their project and course work. Additional information will be available upon registration. Contact patricia.fojut@ces.uwex.edu for more details.

FEE: \$250 includes Master Naturalist Binder. Online registration is available at <http://wimasternaturalist.org>



**WISCONSIN
Master Naturalist**





Nature Discovery for Families

Owl Prowl for Families

Friday, January 24 and Saturday, January 25, 6:30-8:30 pm

Join a naturalist for an evening out with the owls. An interactive program will highlight the habits and adaptations of our nocturnal neighbors. Then we will walk the woodlands of Wehr listening and looking for Great Horned and Eastern Screech Owls.

Fee: \$10 per person, \$7 per person Milwaukee Co. Resident, \$5 for Friends of Wehr members

Snow Stories and S'Mores

Saturday, February 15, 6:30- 8:30 pm

Hike the winter woods by moonlight in search of the sights and sounds of February. We will watch the moon rise, scan tree silhouettes and explore the stories of wildlife tracks and trails. Warm drinks and S'Mores are our treat to enjoy around the fire after our hike. This program is for families with children ages 6 and older.

Fee: \$10 per person, \$7 per person Milwaukee Co. Resident, \$5 for Friends of Wehr members

For Families

**Saturday & Sunday,
March 29 & 30 1- 4 pm**

Bring the whole family to celebrate the budding of spring and our connection with Wisconsin's past. The program includes a short walk to the Sugarbush, a visit to an old-time sugarin' camp, a boil down demonstration and hands-on activities for children. A pancake with real maple syrup will top off your day. The guided hikes begin at 1 pm and continue every 15 minutes until 4 pm. Maple sugar cotton candy, maple treats and tapping equipment will be on sale.

Fee: \$5 per person, payable at the door; Children ages 2 & under - Free



FRIENDS OF WEHR NATURE STORE

**Got The Winter Blues?
We Have Cabin Fever Busters!**

Supplies for the Backyard Maple Syrup Maker



Bird Song CD's and Field Guides -
Study Now and Be Ready For Spring
Snuggly Nature Sweatshirts

Nature puzzles, activity kits and
books for children



All proceeds go
to Friends of Wehr
to support the
educational
programs at
Wehr Nature Center.

Open 8:30 am-4 pm

Shop In The Beauty Of Nature



Community Organizations

Wehr is fortunate to host several organizations who share their passion and knowledge about the natural world with the public. For more information about these organizations and details about their programs, please visit their web-sites or call Wehr (414) 425-8550.

Wehr Camera Club is dedicated to sharing a passion for photography and nature.

Visit <http://wnccameraclub.com/sch.html> for program information. Public programs are held the second Saturday of each month, September to June, from 9-11 am.

Wisconsin Metro Audubon Society is a chapter of the National Audubon Society that encourages environmental stewardship through education and conservation. Public programs are held the third Wednesday of each month from 7-9 pm, September to May. Visit <http://www.wimetroaudubon.org> for program information.

Wild Ones, Natural Landscapers Inc. supports the preservation, restoration and establishment of native plant communities by promoting the use of native plants in landscaping. Meetings are held at WNC from 1:30-3:30 pm the second Saturday of each month from September to April. Visit www.wildones.org for program information.

Wehr Astronomical Society is a group of amateur astronomers that promote the study of astronomy. Meetings are from 7-9 pm the second Tuesday of each month, September to June. Visit <http://www.wehrastr.org> for information

Adventure Summer Day Camp

Give Your Child the Gift of Nature This Summer

Have your child join our professional naturalists for outdoor adventures that spark their curiosity, make memories and lead to personal discovery. Camps are held throughout our beautiful Milwaukee County Parks.

For complete program descriptions and on-line registration go to: <http://bit.ly/1aTnjTD> or call Wehr at (414) 425-8550.

Nature Camps

Small Wonders

Ages 3-4 with an adult

June 17-19, 9-11:30 am

Wehr Nature Center

Nature Friends

Ages 5-6

July 8-10, 9 am-Noon

Greenfield Park

Nature Snoopers*

Ages 6-9

July 15-17, 9 am-4 pm

Wehr Nature Center

Kid Expeditions*

Ages 7-9

July 29-August 1, 9 am-4 pm

Wehr Nature Center

Wildlife Adventures

Ages 10-13

June 25 & 26, 9 am-4 pm

Ross Lodge in Whitnall Park

Kid vs Wild

Ages 10-13

August 6 & 7, 9 am-4 pm

Ross Lodge in Whitnall Park



Fishing Camps

Small Fry Fishing

Ages 3-4 with an adult

June 14, 9:30 am-11:30 am

Scout Lake Park

Fishin' Kids

Ages 5-6 with an adult

June 21, 9:30 am-Noon

Scout Lake Park

Reelers

Ages 7-12

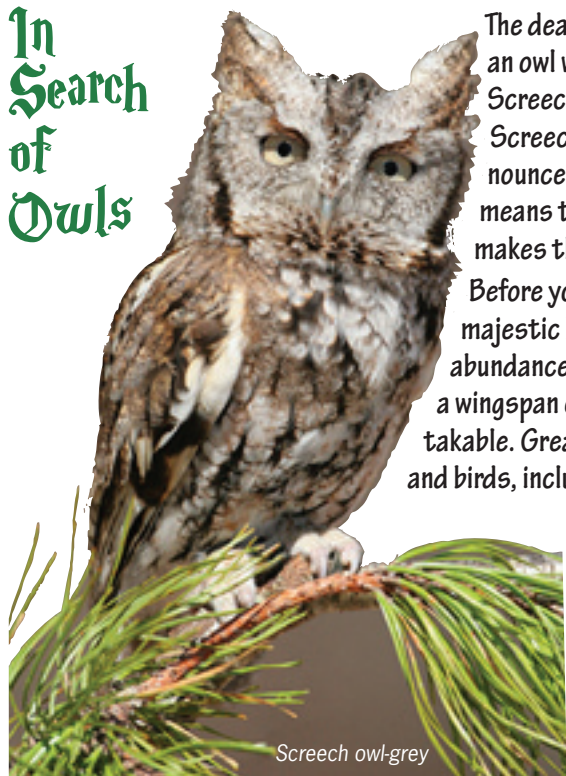
June 28, 9 am-Noon

Scout Lake Park



* Before and After Care available. \$10 per session, pre-registration requested.

In Search of Owls



Screech owl-grey

The dead of winter may be frigid and snowy but it is the “hottest” time of year if you’re an owl watcher. It is during the long winter nights that our resident Great Horned and Screech Owls are most often seen and heard. From December to March Great Horned and Screech Owls are guarding nesting territories and that means a lot of vocalizing to announce their presence to other owls who might invade their space. Having a territory also means the birds are moving over a smaller area, making it easier to locate them. All of this makes the quest for a glimpse of an owl a feasible challenge for determined bird watchers.

Before you begin combing the woods for owls, become familiar with the habits of these majestic birds. The Great Horned Owl is our largest resident owl and is found in surprising abundance throughout the Milwaukee area. Its size (an adult stands nearly 2 feet tall with a wingspan of over 4 feet) and the distinct tufts of feathers make the Great Horned unmistakable. Great Horns are powerful hunters, taking a varied diet of skunks, rabbits, rodents, and birds, including smaller owls like the Screech. They’ve even been known to attack small dogs and cats. They inhabit wooded areas in backyards and parks and are even found in the heart of the city! Great Horned Owls are the earliest nesting birds in North America. Pairs begin calling to each other in December and continue until eggs are laid, usually by late January. Great Horned Owls use old stick nests made by crows, hawks or herons that can be in evergreen or deciduous trees. Keep an eye out for these conspicuous nests as you walk the winter woods.

The Eastern Screech Owl is the wildcat of Milwaukee’s night skies. The Screech Owl stands just 8 inches tall, with a wingspread of a little less than two feet,

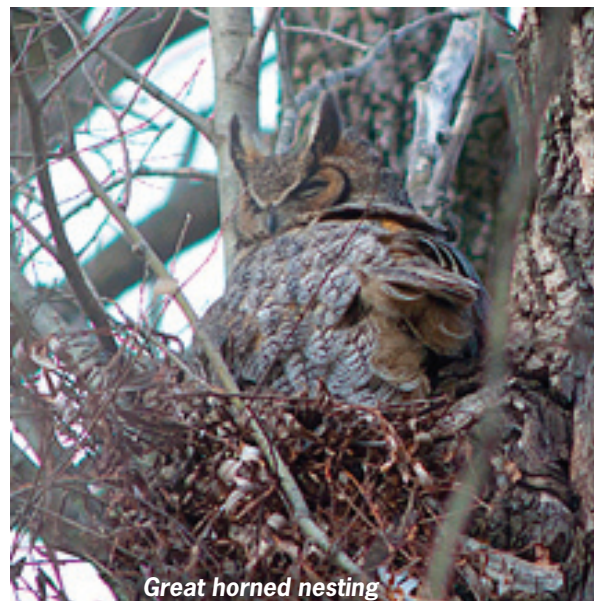
but they are ferocious predators hunting insects, rodents, small birds, reptiles and amphibians. This tufted owl can occur in two color phases, rusty red and gray. Like the Great Horned, Screech Owls can be found in wooded areas throughout Milwaukee. These cavity nesting birds set up territories from January to March and their distinct whinny call can be heard during late night or early morning hours.

Start your search for owls during daylight. Look up to find potential nests or cavity holes, but make sure to keep an eye on the ground as well. Owls regurgitate undigested fur, feathers and bones as pellets that are oval shaped. Pellets can be found on the ground beneath roost trees and are a sure sign there are owls in the area. Owl scat or “whitewash” on branches or tree trunks is another clue of a roost or nest. However, the best tool for locating owls is to listen and observe the mobbing behavior of other birds. Crows, blue jays and even the little black-capped chickadee will swoop and mob owls loudly. Follow the raucous crowing and jaying until you find the predatory owl that is the source of the smaller bird’s displeasure.

Once you have located a probable owl woods by daylight, it is time to venture out at night to look and listen. Great Horned Owls call most actively at dawn and dusk, while Screech Owls wait until well after darkness to begin vocalizing.



Screech owl-red



Great horned nesting

Listen here to their calls so you can recognize the five hoot call of the Great Horned Owl and the whinny and trill of the Screech Owl. Follow the calling to its source, but don’t approach the owls too closely.



Great horned baby

Place a red filter over the beam of your flashlight so you can see the owls without harming their (or your) night vision. Remember they are busy raising a family, so keep your disturbance to a minimum. Owl parents will abandon their nest if it is approached frequently, so respect their privacy. Enjoy your encounter with these beautiful raptors- it is well worth the cold feet and sleepy eyes!

At Wehr Nature Center
 9701 W. College Ave.
 Franklin, WI 53132
 In Whitnall Park
 Open Daily 8-4:30
 (Check for holiday hours)
wehrrnaturecenter@milwcnty.com



**Learn more about activities and events
 throughout the Milwaukee County Parks**

Wish List

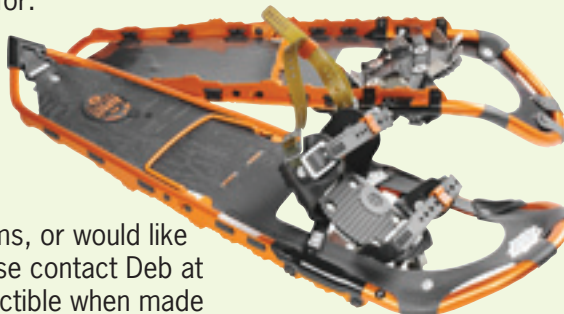
Contributions of any amount will be appreciated for:

New or gently used Snow Shoes

Adobe Creative Suite 6 Software

Hydraulic Log Splitter

Pudgy Pie Makers



If you are interested in donating any of these items, or would like to contribute money toward their purchase, please contact Deb at (414) 425-8550. Your contributions are tax-deductible when made to the Friends of Wehr.

**LOOK FOR
 US ON
[FACEBOOK](#)**

**FOLLOW
 US ON
[TWITTER](#)**

FIND US ON

Membership Application: This is an annual membership from January - December

Mail to: Friends of Wehr 9701 College Ave. Franklin, WI 53132 Make checks payable to Friends of Wehr or renew online at www.friendsofwehr.org

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY-STATE-ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____ EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP TYPE

| | Individual | Family |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Regular | \$25 <input type="checkbox"/> | \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Senior (65) | \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> | \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Supporting | \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> | \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Volunteer (50 hrs) | \$20 <input type="checkbox"/> | \$30 <input type="checkbox"/> |

Payment Method ☐ Cash ☐ Check# _____ (payable to Friends of Wehr) Additional Donation \$ _____

☐ Charge (Visa MC Discover AE) # _____ Expires _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____ Staff Initials _____ Date Received _____

